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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR MEETS NORWEGIAN NGOS WORKING IN SUDAN

REF: OSLO 1359

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission, Kevin M. Johnson  
for reasons 1.4 b and d

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: As part of Embassy Oslo's ongoing engagement with Norwegians on peace and reconciliation, the Ambassador hosted a breakfast meeting with officials from leading Norwegian NGOs working in Sudan on November 16. All agreed that Khartoum was impeding their aid efforts in Darfur and that the international community needs to clearly spell out minimum standards of behavior for rebel groups in the region and for Khartoum (using sanctions if necessary to enforce them). While agreeing that the situation in Darfur was very bad, officials were equally concerned about south Sudan, feeling that the Darfur crisis has overshadowed a worsening situation -- one with the potential to undo what progress has been made in Sudan so far. NGO officials and the Embassy officers also discussed advocacy efforts and ways to more publicly engage Norwegians on the work that Norwegian and American NGOs and governments are doing in Sudan, one of the key areas where the U.S. and Norway have close and productive cooperation. END SUMMARY

Frustration with Khartoum, Concern about Darfur  
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¶2. (C) Norwegian Church Aid International Development Director Bjorg Mide summed up NGOs' opinions that Khartoum was seen as an obstacle to progress, hampering work outside of camp borders and interfering with NGO project management. According to Mide, the Government is becoming increasingly difficult to work with and trusts no one at this point, including international aid organizations. Norwegian People's Aid International Development Director Liv Torres told us that Khartoum's interference in Darfur and lack of progress in south Sudan has forced NPA to maintain emergency humanitarian relief operations rather than transition to long term development in 2007 as originally planned.

¶3. (C) Norwegian Refugee Council International Development Director Jens Mjagedal told us that Norway needs to strongly advocate for better humanitarian space in Darfur. NGOs agreed that the international community, specifically the UN, needs to set limits on Khartoum's behavior (using sanctions in necessary) making clear what are minimum international standards of behavior. According to Mjagedal humanitarian relief agencies were in danger of becoming "useful idiots" by continuing their work solely on Khartoum's terms. (NOTE The NRC recently closed its humanitarian relief operations in south Darfur after failing to reach agreement with Khartoum on the future of its operations. END NOTE) NGOs saw Darfur as a convenient crisis for Khartoum and one that helps keep international attention diverted from what the NGOs see as a

potentially more dangerous situation in the south, delay in CPA implementation.

#### South Sudan

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14. (C) NGO representatives see little substantive progress the CPA. Norwegian Refugee Council stressed the need for quick, visible actions that would give IDPs living around Khartoum something to come home to. NGOs saw the CPA as immaterial to the average south Sudanese and expressed frustration at the World Bank's inability to quickly fund programs that would have an impact in the south. As an example of what the NRC saw as a worsening mood among south Sudanese diaspora, they failed to attract any interest in a recent "go and see" trip designed to get refugees in other countries and IDPs to visit the south. (NOTE: These accounts differ somewhat from the more positive but slow progress line we have been hearing from the MFA. END NOTE) NGOs were also concerned about the Government of South Sudan's ability to effectively promote land reform, provide security and to effectively administer its territory.

#### Embassy Engagement with NGOs

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15. (C) As part of Post's ongoing efforts to engage Norwegians on peace and reconciliation issues (reftel) we compared notes on how to move these issues forward with our NGO contacts. We are exploring public approaches that can be used to highlight the issues and to remind Norwegians that the U.S. and Norway are actively and jointly engaged in Sudan. Norwegian NGOs are clearly interested in talking to us and coordinating more closely to highlight the humanitarian situation in Sudan. Post will continue to engage with NGOs and to look for ways to remind the Norwegian public of the close and productive cooperation we share on this type of issue.  
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